

THE DRAMA;

OR,

THEATRICAL

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MR. DOWTON.

"Where worth untinted is a downright part,
Charms from a bold benignity of heart,
And howe'er lowly, simple, or undrest,
Grows through its genuine beauty on the breast,
There DOWTON, always, our attention draws,
And never fails of forcing our applause.
Yet, tho' thus strenuous, DOWTON, in thy praise,
The candid muse her sentiments conveys
Still undebauch'd by flattery or by pride,
From nature start not fatally aside,
Through idle hopes ambitiously to climb,
In parts of grace or characters sublime.
Almost as soon as FARLEY would she hear,
In wild *Orestes* or exclaiming *Lear*;
As find thee madly purposed to rehearse
One single sentence of a tragic verse."

This is newly applied.

If the doctrine taught by ancient wisdom be credited, the soul enjoys in its original state a general and unbounded knowledge. At its first entrance into mortal life, it loses the consciousness, but not the reality of this universal information. It is darkened, it is forgotten as a dream, and like it, now and then, flashes on our minds, when events and circumstances awaken its recollection. Education watches

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these momentary gleams, collects their scattered rays of light together, and is by them enabled to form a just opinion of the powers and inclinations of its pupils.

However true or false the present age may consider this doctrine to be, it is necessary that more attention should be paid to the unfolding bias of the youthful mind, than it is now usual to bestow. Parents in general, led by the instinct of interest alone, lay down plans for the promotion of their children's fortunes, without consulting either their abilities or their inclinations; sometimes even before it was possible to ascertain whether their speechless infancy would ever be able to utter a word. Conscious of their superior wisdom, they exert not their reason to persuade to obedience, but their authority to enforce it. Every struggle of hidden genius opposing the execution of their designs, they proclaim a breach of filial duty. Every remonstrance which the lips of youth attempt respectfully to pronounce, is hushed, before it is heard, as rebellious. Every wish of prosecuting studies, which do not tend to forward the end in view, is crushed as useless, if not foolish; and the young man who feels himself possessed of talents which, if allowed to expand, would gather fame, is compelled either to sacrifice them to the inattentive ignorance or obstinate incredulity of his parents, or else to seek far from the paternal roof, a field in which to display them unrestrained.

It is this blindness of men to the faculties and propensities of the rising generation, or rather their neglect, and consequently their mistaken notions of them, that has frequently clad a reprobate in the garb of a divine, a coward in an officer's uniform, a senseless blockhead in a professor's gown; has spent half a fortune to introduce an idiot into Parliament, and compelled an adulterous counsellor to thunder loudly against the depravity of morals, in the numerous criminal cases that occur, to the great honour of our nation and our age.

The subject of the present sketch has no reason to complain of undue severity on the part of his parents. They did not, it is true, study the early bent of his mind and lend it their assistance, but their situation in life prevented them from attending closely to his propensities, and his indications of future talents; and to their praise be it remember-

ed, that when they once unfolded themselves, they did not seek to repress them. They allowed him the advantage of a good education, and discharged their duty towards him, notwithstanding their inferiority in the scale of fortune and society, in a manner equally useful to him, and honourable to themselves.

Mr. DOWTON was born in the year 1766, at Exeter, where his father kept a respectable inn. Early in life he was sent to a seminary in high repute, in the neighbourhood of that town, where he remained engaged in liberal studies till he reached the age of sixteen, when he was articulated to an architect. During his apprenticeship, his dramatic genius began to glimmer, but as yet very faintly. Several young gentlemen at Exeter joined their purses and their abilities, to establish a private theatre, and form a company of actors. On this stage the apprentice now and then displayed his talents, and the reception with which he met, increased his partiality for theatrical representations. His favourite character was *Carlos*, in "*The Revenge*;" for strange as it may appear, it is nevertheless true, that almost all our best comic actors courted MELPOMENE before they condescended to woo her laughing sister. The crowded houses which he drew in this part, emboldened his exertions and fired his ambition. He soon conceived a disgust for the duties of his office, and fancying that success would attend him every where, in less than a year after he had been articulated, took a sudden leave of his master, and repaired to Ashburton, in Devonshire, with a company of strollers. He appeared for the first time at this place, in *Carlos*, and was greeted with a large share of applause. Finding that his expectations had not been disappointed, his love for his new profession became enthusiastic, and, it is said, that being desirous to act the part of *Beaufort*, in "*The Citizen*," which had been allotted to a brother performer, he exchanged his best coat with him for the character.

This enthusiasm was not of long duration; for however thirsting after fame, he was too material to feed on plaudits alone, and he soon found that his riches did not keep pace with his reputation. His high spirit supported him for a considerable time in his contest with difficulties; but the regular and irresistible approaches of starvation, brought him

back to a sense that life was the greatest good, and he and a companion in distress, resolved to seek a shelter beneath their paternal roofs. DOWTON's father received them kindly at his inn, and a few months' good living and domestic comforts, erased from their minds the remembrance of their past sufferings. They determined to toil for theatrical fame a second time, and soon resumed their dramatic peregrinations. At last, after encountering and conquering the innumerable difficulties with which strollers, though endowed with superior talents, have to contend, our hero was fortunate enough to obtain an engagement at the Weymouth theatre, of which Mr. HUGHES was then Manager. When it had expired, he repaired to his native town, where he boldly, and, it is said, not unsuccessfully performed *Romeo*, *Macbeth*, and the highest tragic characters. From thence he visited Kent, where he joined Mrs. BAKER's company, and soon after married her daughter, who has presented him with two children.

The spreading reputation of Mr. DOWTON excited nearly at the same time the Managers of Covent Garden, the Haymarket, and the Bath theatre, Messrs. HARRIS, COLMAN, and DIMOND, to offer him terms for a permanent engagement at their respective houses. But fame was the chief aim of his exertions: and having heard of the overflowing audiences which Mr. ELLISTON's *Shave* in the comedy of "*The Jew*," had collected, the spirit of rivalry led him to write to Mr. WROUGHTON, the acting-manager of Drury Lane, and to request the permission of representing this character before the London public. He at the same time directed Mr. WROUGHTON, should he wish to inquire about his talents, to apply to Mr. CUMBERLAND, who would be able to satisfy him on that point. The answer having proved favourable, Mr. DOWTON repaired to the metropolis with Mr. CUMBERLAND, and was so enthusiastically received in the part already alluded to, that Mr. WROUGHTON proposed him terms for an engagement which caused him to refuse the offers of the Managers of Covent Garden, the Haymarket, and the Bath theatre. Ever since he has proved constant to Drury Lane, where he still continues during the winter season, to delight the public, and disarm the severity of criticism.

Whilst some of our most eminent comedians degrade our best plays into farces, by the grimaces with which they amuse the galleries, Mr. DOWTON wisely disdains to owe his fame to the suppleness of the muscles of his face. He does not paint caricatures, but portrays man as he is. In the expression of simple passions, he is always chaste and correct. Not that correctness that proceeds from the want of genius to commit brilliant faults, but that which springs from genius guided by a sound judgment. In the mixed motions of kindness and anger, of joy and sorrow, and in the peevishness breaking through the good nature of age, he has in our opinion no equal on the present stage. His transitions from one passion to another are not so sudden as to appear unconnected; he spreads all their shades from the darkest to the faintest in quick succession before us;—and even in the union of various feelings, preserves their features distinct to our sight. His *Abednego in the Jew and the Doctor*, and his *Old Dornton*, will elucidate our last assertion. In low comedy, he is less successful, perhaps, because he seeks to imitate some of his contemporaries. There is only one character in this line we believe, which he sustains with any power, it is that of King Arthur in "*Tom Thumb*;" and this character is of a peculiar kind of humour not usual with vulgar comic actors, and not difficult, we should imagine even with professed tragedians; indeed if the great requisite in mock-heroic acting is a serious manner opposed to ludicrous words, it will not be found very difficult to any performer. The powers of Mr. DOWTON will scarcely bend to any expression that is not elicited by the stronger emotions that approximate to tragedy, and which are comic in proportion, only as they are familiar, or extreme, or unreasonable, or strongly contrasted with their object. He is therefore a comedian of very superior powers in his happier characters, since he catches the *feelings* rather than the *habits* of men, and we lament when we see him degrading his abilities and his fame by any attempt at buffoonery, of which he has sometimes been guilty. His farcical servants and sailors are therefore not worthy of him; he always appears above them; his emotions are too refined and his faces not even passably monstrous. In the Jewish dialect

he is much inferior to that clever little actor WEWITZER, although he personated the part of *Sheva* in the *Jew* with much discrimination. It would, however, be unreasonable to expect that a man should excel in every thing he attempts to perform, and he who is so justly intitled to the highest praise for the superiority of his genius, need not blush to yield the palm in, at best, a mechanical acquirement.

But who is so impressive, so striking, so thrilling, as this actor, in scenes of angry perturbation, or of anger subdued by the patience or pleasantry of its object? His *Captain Cape*, in "*The Old Maid*," is a rough miniature of his *Sir Anthony Absolute*, in "*The Rivals*," and both are inimitable portraits of a mind naturally good, indulging itself in bursts of extravagant anger. Most actors are content with straining their eye-balls, protruding their lips, and pounding the air with one arm, to express their rage; in DOWTON is seen all the approaches, the changes, and the effects of that passion, which becomes impotent by its very power: most actors are content to stare with stupid inaction at their interlocutor, while he is combating or deprecating their rage; DOWTON still preserves the great features of rage, impatience; he twists about his fingers, changes his attitude and his gestures, mutters hastily with his lips, turns away at intervals from the speaker, with a mouth of contempt, or seems unable to wait for his conclusion. The scene with his son in "*The Rivals*," where he insists on the latter's marriage, is for this reason the master-piece of extravagant anger. But then when his son has won upon his feelings, or suddenly complies with his demand, who at the same time can drop with such a fall of nature from the highest of passion to the most soft emotions and the most social pleasantry. His expression of satisfaction with another, his grateful shake of the hand, and his hurried thanks breaking through the intervals of overpowering joy, exhibit the perfection of social enjoyment.

Perhaps this character may be considered as one of his most perfect performances.—It is in itself a most exquisitely drawn portrait. It is no more fashionable, it is human nature, displayed in the strong shades of ever-changing

ging passions. Who, that possesses a warm heart joined with an ardent imagination, has not, like him, frequently allowed the latter to fly into bursts of impatience or anger, which the former disapproved, and at last assuaged? The language in which he expresses his feelings, was dictated by truth itself to the poet who wrote the comedy, and can be equalled only by the energetic delivery, eloquent play of features and appropriate gestures of Mr. DOWTON in this part. *Sir Anthony*, though kind and even good humoured, is not only the most inconsiderately passionate of men, but unconsciously tyrannical over those who by nature are placed within the sphere of his command. We say unconsciously tyrannical, because his fiery imagination carries him beyond the bounds of reflection, and points out an exertion of arbitrary power, as a harmless display of lawful authority. DOWTON, who excels in the delineation of mixed feelings, can also depict the sudden starts and quick successions of rising passions, with more accuracy perhaps than any other performer of the present day. In the following speech, his excellence may be traced, when *Mrs. Malaprop* hopes the *Captain* will have no objection to be married with *Lydia*—"Objection! let him object if he dare. No, no, *Mrs. Malaprop*, *Jack* knows that the least demur puts me in a frenzy directly. My process was always very simple—in their younger days 'twas "*Jack* do this; if he demurred, I knocked him down—and if he grumbled at that, I always sent him out of the room." When he exclaims "*Objection!*" Astonishment and wounded pride at the very hint, that his son may dare to disobey him, mark his countenance, which suddenly expresses an air of satisfaction at the consciousness of his own power, at these words: "Let him object if he dare!" and the following sentence. It resumes all its calmness, when he describes the simplicity of the process, which secured his authority; but kindles anew with "if he demurred," then beams with a smile of triumph at "I knocked him down," which changes into a frown of disappointment at "and if he grumbled at that," and then reappears with his ultimate success.

To point out every passage in the part, in which Mr. DOWTON excels, would, in fact be to point out the whole

of the scenes in which he is any way concerned. As our space will not allow us to extend our remarks further, we will only mention the moment when he interrupts the duel, and anger and fear successively cloud his countenance, and check and hurry on his sentences, as one of his happiest exertions of skill; so like nature, as to deceive us into a total forgetfulness of its being the offspring of art. In the scene also in which his son unexpectedly yields to his command of marrying a lady whose name he does not mention, how naturally does his irritation, (raised by a former refusal,) melt into good humour. And in his description of the lady's charms, the enthusiasm of youth seems to glow once more on his cheek and to fire his soul; and the reproaches which his son's feigned coolness draws from him, burst from his lips with a degree of indignant surprise, which few can express so successfully. (1)

(To be concluded in our next.)

(1) "*Sir Anthony Absolute* and his son are the most sterling characters of the play. The tetchy, positive, impatient, overbearing, but warm and generous character of the one, and the gallant determined spirit, adroit address, and dry humour of the other, are admirably set off against each other, by the dramatist. The two scenes in which they contend about the proposed match, in the first of which the indignant lover is as choleric and rash as the old gentleman is furious and obstinate, and in the latter of which the son affects such a cool indifference and dutiful submission to his father, from having found out that it is the mistress of his choice, whom he is to be compelled to marry, are masterpieces, both of wit, humour and character. *Sir Anthony Absolute* is an evident copy after SMOLLETT's kind-hearted, high-spirited MATTHEW BRAMBLE, as *Mrs. Malaprop*, is after the redoubted linguist, *Mrs. Tabitha Bramble*: and indeed, the whole tone, as well as the local scenery of the '*Rivals*' reminds the reader of '*Humphrey Clinker*.'" Vide OXBERRY'S *English Drama*.

LINES TO MISS TUNSTALL.

"And on that cheek and o'er that brow
So soft, so calm, yet eloquent,
The smiles that win, the tints that glow
But tell of days in goodness spent
A mind at peace, with all below
An heart whose love is innocent."

BYRON.

Because thou hast the power
Which hath such charms for me
In pleasure's brightest hour—
In deepest misery—

The witching power of song—
The eloquence of Heaven
Which steals like balm along
The heart that care has riven.

Because 'tis said thy heart
Feels virtue's warmest glow.
(And thou perform'st a part
That prove it to be so.)

For this I would entwine
A wreath of poesy
To offer at thy shrine
That should be worthy thee.

Vain hope—I feel too well
The weakness of my lyre
How harsh the sweetest spell
Of song its chords respire.

It matters not—thy lays
Once heard, none can forget
And thy own heart repays
Thy filial feeling's debt.

G. J. DE WILDE.

May, 1824.

EDWARD'S SHOVEL BOARDS.

Slender, "Aye by these gloves did he (or I might never come in mine own great chamber again else) of seven groats in mill—sixpences and two *Edward's Shovel Boards*, that cost me two shillings and two pence a piece of yead miller by these gloves."

Merry Wives of Windsor.

Mr. DRAMA,

DOUCE, FARMER, MALONE, and other commentators have noticed this expression. STEVENS says, that one of these *pieces of metal* is mentioned in MIDDLETON's comedy of *the Roaring Girl*, 1611 :—

—"Away slid I, my man, like a shovel-board shilling," &c.

which seems to imply that he did not consider them as a current coin. But FARMER asserts, that the *Edward shovel boards* were the *broad* shillings of EDWARD VI. ; and that TAYLOR, in his note to his *Travel of Twelvepence* tells us that "EDWARD's shillings, for the most part, are used at *shoave-board*." MALONE and DOUCE concur in the same opinion, but their notes are too long for me to quote.

Now FARMER, (whom MALONE, I think extracts,) bears out STEVENS in his supposition, that these pieces were not of silver ; for he talks of having seen them of the weight of half an ounce, and an ounce,—certes, an ounce of silver could not have been a saleable commodity at two shillings and two pence of our friend *Slender's* money.

I happen to have one of the *broad* shillings of EDWARD VI. the size of it equals one of our present half-crown pieces, but it is very thin, and has no milling, nor raised edge to protect the impression from injury, and consequently a great part of it is obliterated, particularly on the reverse. Its weight, I take it, is about equal to that of the current shilling.

I should like to have a game of "*shoave board*,"—I wish some of your readers would acquaint you with it for me.

Yours &c.

L. L. D.

DRAMATIC EXCERPTA, No. VI.

1.—The third daughter of MILTON, was named DEBORAH, and to show "the instability of all human affairs"—she married a poor Spitalfields weaver, named ABRAHAM CLARK:—she kept a petty chandler's shop, first at Holloway, and afterwards in Cock-lane, near Shoreditch Church. They were so poor that Queen CAROLINE sent her fifty guineas, and on the 5th of April, 1750, that unrivalled composition of her father's, "*Comus*," was played for her benefit: and the profits of the night were one hundred and thirty pounds.

2.—GEORGE THE THIRD.—It may be unknown to many of your readers, that our late respected monarch had an early propensity or predilection for the drama. On the 4th Jan. 1749, at Leicester House, before a large party of nobility, he performed the part of *Portius* in the tragedy of "*Cato*," being then under eleven years of age.

3.—The same monarch it may be worth recording was twice attacked when visiting of Drury-lane Theatre. 3rd Feb. 1796, while returning insulted by the mob, and a large stone thrown into his carriage; and 11th May, 1800, in the theatre shot at by the lunatic HATFIELD.

4.—It is a singular coincidence, that the same letters compose the name MAJOCHI (a person who will never be forgotten, however fallacious his own memory may have been) and of JACHIMO, the artful and perjured accuser, in the "*Cymbeline*" of SHAKESPEARE.

5.—GAY wrote his well-known ballad of *Black-eyed Susan* upon Mrs. MONTFORD, a celebrated actress, contemporary with CIBBER. After her retirement from the stage, love, and the ingratitude of a bosom friend, deprived her of her senses, and she was placed in a receptacle for lunatics. One day, during a lucid interval, she asked her attendant what play was to be performed that evening; and was told that it was "*Hamlet*." In this tragedy,

whilst on the stage, she had ever been received with rapture in *Ophelia*. The recollection struck her, and with that cunning which is so often allied to insanity she eluded the care of the keepers and got to the theatre, where she concealed herself until the scene in which *Ophelia* enters in her insane state; she then pushed on the stage before the lady who had performed the previous part of the character could come on, and exhibited a more perfect representation of madness than the utmost exertions of the mimic art could effect; she was in truth *Ophelia* herself, to the amazement of the performers and the astonishment of the audience. Nature having made this last effort, her vital powers failed her. On going off she exclaimed—"It is all over!" She was immediately conveyed back to her late place of security, and a few days after—

"Like a lily drooping, she hung her head and died."

6.—FRENCH THEATRICALS, [from the private life of *Marie Antoinette*, by Madame CAMPAN, page 147.]—The queen took but little pains to promote literature or the fine arts: she had suffered some vexations, in consequence of her having ordered the performance of the "*Comte de Bourbon*," on the celebration of the marriage of Madame CLOTILDA, the king's sister with the prince of Piedmont:—The court and the people of Paris censured as indecorous, the performance of a piece in which such parts were assigned to characters, bearing the names of the reigning family and that with which the new alliance was formed. The reading of this piece by Count de GUIBERT in the queen's closet produced that enthusiasm which prevents all sober and judicious criticism—she promised she would have no more readings—yet at the request of M. de CUBIÈRES, the king's equerry, the queen agreed to hear the reading of a comedy, written by his brother:—MOLE (an actor who was the delight of the Theatre Français, and was followed by FLEURY) read for the author—by magic this skilful reader gained our unanimous approbation of a work equally bad and ridiculous, his delightful voice prevented the wretched lines of DORAT CUBIÈRES from striking our ears. The piece was admitted for performance at Fon-

taineblean, and for the first time—the king had the curtain dropped before the end of the play—it was called the *Dramomane or Dramaturge*. All the characters died of poison mixed in a pie !!! The queen highly disconcerted at having recommended this absurd production, resolved once more never to hear another reading—and this time kept her word.

7.—*Mustapha and Zeangir* is by M. de CHAMFORT.—This tragedy was highly successful at the court theatre at Fontainebleau—the queen procured the author a pension of 1200 francs—but it failed on being represented at Paris. The spirit of opposition in that city, delighted in annulling the decision of the court.

8.—*Drama versus Music*, [page 149.]—The queen determined never more to give countenance to new dramatic works, but reserved her patronage for musical composers. In a few years, that art arrived at a degree of perfection it had never before attained in France. To gratify the queen, the manager of the opera collected the first company of comic actors at Paris, GLUCK, PICCINI and SACHINI came in succession and were treated with great distinction at court:—GLUCK was admitted to the queen's toilet who never ceased talking to him while he remained there. She asked him one day whether he had nearly brought his opera of "*Armida*" to a conclusion and if it pleased him, GLUCK replied very coolly in his German accent—"Madame it will soon be finished, and really it will be sublime." His own opinion thus roundly expressed, was confirmed: for surely the lyric stage never witnessed a more effective piece.

9.—*Music versus Dancing*, [page 150.]—GLUCK often had to deal with self-sufficiency, at least equal to his own:—He was very reluctant to introduce long ballets into *Iphigenia*. VESTRIS deeply regretted that the opera was not terminated by a *Chaconne*, in which that god of dance might display all his power, and complained to GLUCK about it, who replied, that in so interesting a subject, capering and dancing would be misplaced.—'A chaconne! a chaconne!' roared

the enraged musician—"We must describe the Greeks—and had they chaconne's?" "What? Had they not?"—returned the astonished dancer—"faith then, so much the worse for them!"

10.—*Opera.* The queen did not confine her admiration to the lofty style of the French and Italian operas:—our comic opera also pleased her; she greatly valued GRETRY's music, so well adapted to the spirit and feeling of the words, that time has not yet diminished its charm. A great deal of poetry set to music by GRETRY, is by MARMONTEL. The day after the first performance of "*Zemira and Azor*," GRETRY and MARMONTEL were presented to the queen in the gallery of Fontainebleau; she addressed all her compliments on the opera's success to GRETRY, telling him she had dreamed of the enchanting effect of the trio by *Zemira's* father and sister behind the magic mirror—GRETRY in a transport of joy took MARMONTEL in his arms. "Ah! my friend, excellent music may be made of this." "And execrable words" coolly observed MARMONTEL, to whom her majesty had not addressed a single word.

11.—On the 22nd Oct. 1781, the queen gave birth to a Dauphin.—In the Evening Madame BILLONI, an actress of the Italian Theatre, representing a fairy in the piece then performing, sung some pretty couplets, by IMBERT, of which the following is the sense:

On fairy plinions I advance,
Great tidings to impart:
An infant prince is borne to France,
And cheers each loyal heart.

Long may this cherish'd Dauphin wait,
E're he the throne ascend:
And long with glory rule the state,
Before his reign shall end.

M. MERARD DE SAINT JUST made a quatrain on the same subject:

"This infant prince our hopes are centered in,
Will, doubtless, make us happy, rich, and free;

And since with *somebody*—he must begin,

My fervent prayer is—that it may be me !

SAM SAM'S SON.

Truro, May 1st.

ON THE FRENCH DRAMA.

MR. DRAMA,

The most important and most extensive department of French literature, and that on which the nation founds its highest pretensions to celebrity, is the DRAMA. M. J. CHENIER asserts that tragedy and comedy are richer in genius, than all the other walks of French poetry taken together; he particularizes "*CORNEILLE est un génie sublime ; il sait créer ; il est grand. RACINE eut un talent admirable ; il sait embellir ; il est parfait. VOLTAIRE eut un esprit supérieur ; il étendit les routes de l'art ; il est vaste.*" Besides the above classical names, we may add CREBILLON,

THOMAS CORNEILLE, LAFOSSE, GUYMOND DE LA TOUCHE, LEFRANC, LEMIERRE, de BELLOI, la HARPE and others.

More than 40 years have elapsed, since a translation of "*Hamlet*" opened the career of fame to a dramatic poet, who has since risen to a high reputation, in the same walk of tragedy, DUCIS. "*Romeo and Juliet*," "*Macbeth*" and "*Othello*," were translated by the same author; who produced as original works "*Œdipus*" and an Arabian tragedy, called "*Abufar*." M. ARNAULT in the beginning of the Revolution brought out his "*Marius à Minturnes*" with brilliant success, and shortly after "*Lucrèce, Cincinnatus, Oscar, et les Vénitiens*." LEGOUNE followed him with "*La Mort d'Abel, of Epichares et Néron*," "*Étéocle et Polynice* and "*La Mort d'Henri IV.*" The most meritorious tragedies at this time, are remarkable for simplicity of action and for having banished all useless personages, such as confidants &c. and all insipid episodes of unmeaning love, which are frequent even in RACINE and CREBILLON.

CORNEILLE, the creator of tragedy, left also a model of the best species of French comedy, "*le Menteur*:" but Mo-

LIERE carried every branch of this art to perfection; after him follows the ingenious and brilliant gaiety of REGNARD, The finesse originale of DUFRESNY, the skill of DESTOUCHES, and the *vis comica* of LE SAGE, who in *Turcaret*, his masterpiece, was almost equal to MOLIERE. The most prolific poet of the times, in his own line of the drama, is M. PICARD, who produced twenty fine comedies before he was forty years of age, and all amusing; he used to personate characters himself in his own plays and was esteemed an actor of merit. Madame CANDEILLE, an actress, produced with success *la belle Fermière*: CHERON, *le Tartuffe des Mœurs*; copied from our "*School for Scandal*," but much inferior.

Other branches equally prolific are the *Drame* or serious comedy, and the lyric theatres, as the great opera and lighter comedy—with song. The list of great operas is very long, and that of the minor productions would be interminable. The species of literary compositions the most analogous to the French character, is certainly the dramatic. "*Natis comedia est!*" The French have a peculiar talent for playing any part they please. They can assume any humours and counterfeit any manners. They never are as themselves; every boudoir or saloon is a theatre where each individual is an actor and spectator. Society is a vast stage where every man and woman ceases to be natural; but in personation. The region which a people so volatile, so undomesticated, so much made up of pomp and show, so insensible to comfort, so eager for pleasure, so indifferent to happiness, delights in, must be that which shews them counterfeit in action. A public theatre unites all that can fascinate a Frenchman; it displays a living active picture of human beings, and gratifies curiosity by letting them into the secrets of their lives and recesses of their hearts. It is a magical fairy ground, and equally enchanting, whether we admire author, actor or audience. The French theatre is the purest and most legitimate descendant of the Greek stage now extant.

Dramatic representations took their origin in France, as in most other countries from religious ceremonies. *Mysteries* and *moralties* first occupied the stage, and the devil played the principal part. Among the first attempts

at a regular theatre, were some translations from the Greek; the *Electra* of SOPHOCLES, and the *Hecuba* of EURIPIDES, by BAIF; and *Iphigenia in Aulis*, by SUBILET; but it does not appear that they were ever performed.

HARDY the most prolific of all the French dramatic writers died in 1630, he produced more than six hundred pieces for the drama; the best whereof is *Mariamme*. Fifty six plays were printed in 1628 in six volumes.—MARNET was born in 1604 at Besançon, and died in 1686. He was the predecessor, the friend, the rival, the enemy, and then again the friend of CORNEILLE, and the author of twelve plays, the best of which is "*Sophonisbe*," imitated from TRISSINO.—ROTROU contemporary of CORNEILLE, wrote thirty plays, only one of which has kept possession of the stage, it is *Venceslas*. SHIRLEY and CORNEILLE may be considered as nearly contemporaries: the former between 1629, and when he died in 1666, had produced thirty-nine plays. The latter commenced in 1635 with *Médée*, and 1675 concluded with *Pulchérine* and *Suréna*. A comparison has been made of the dramatic merits of the two countries in their early days, by balancing all our dramatic writers from Lord SACKVILLE's *Gorboduc* in 1562, and STILL's *Gammer Gurtons Needle* in 1566, to JAMES SHIRLEY's first effusion against all the authors who had written for the French stage before CORNEILLE's *Médée*.—JODELLE may be considered as contemporary with *Gorboduc* and *Gammer Gurton's Needle*, to which succeeded GASCOIGNE's *Jocasta*, and EDWARDS's *Palemon and Arcite*, so admired by Queen ELIZABETH. Before 1581, ten of SENECA's tragedies had been translated into English, together with *Œdipus* by ALEX. NEVILL, aged but sixteen.—In 1568, a tragedy on the subject of *Tancred and Sigismunda*, was written by ROB. WILMOT, and one on the story of *Cambyse*. But the *David and Bethshabe* of PEELE in 1584, contained more natural expression of passion, than was to be met with in the whole French theatre before CORNEILLE. The poets who filled up and completed what these had begun, were GREEN, MARLOW, LYLY, LEGGE, LODGE, SHAKESPEARE, DANIEL, BEAUMONT and FLETCHER, MARSTON, CHAPMAN, RANDOLPH, MIDDLETON, JONSON, Earl of STIRLING, FIELD, DEKKER, WEBSTER, FORD, ROWLEY,

MASSINGER, SUCKLING, HEYWOOD, PHILLIPS, HEMINGE and others.

The French *Hamlet* opens with a scene between *Claudius* and *Polonius*, who in a speech of eighty lines tells him of his project to dethrone his nephew. *Gertrude* appears, and he makes love to her, for they are not yet married !!! *Ophelia* is the daughter of *Claudius* !!! In "*Romeo and Juliet*" they have been still more inhuman—*Romeo* is a hero and *Juliet* an admirer of captured trophies ; *Frier Lawrence*, the *Nurse* and the exquisite *Mercutio* and our old acquaintance the starved *Apothecary* are all omitted !!! The whole is made a tissue of great absurdities.

SAM SAM'S SON.

Truro, May 12, 1824.

SHAKSPEARE & MARSTON.

MR. DRAMA,

Among the numerous anecdotes which the indefatigable compiler of the "*Shaksperiana*" has collected and published in your work, the following, which is more remarkable than any he has given us, since it exhibits the Bard in the new light of an Editor, is omitted. MARSTON was a particular friend of SHAKSPEARE'S, and WOOD in his '*Athena*', speaking of MARSTON, says, "all of his plays except the '*Insatiate Countess*' and the '*Scourge of Villany*' were gathered together by WILL. SHAKSPEARE, the famous Comedian, and being by his care printed at London, 1633, 8vo., were by him entituled, 'the Works of Mr. JOHN MARSTON, &c.', and dedicated to ELIZABETH CARY, Viscountess Falkland."

The anecdotes of SHAKSPEARE'S heroism, wit, and gallantry are common enough, but the above is not so generally known.

Yours &c.

May 5th, 1824

PETER TOMKINS.

SHAKSPEARE.

IN SHAKSPEARI TUMULUM.

VIATORIS SENESCENTIS

VOTUM.

Written by a Traveller, after visiting the Tomb of Shakspeare, at Stratford.

I have liv'd long in this same stirring scene
Of human turmoil, and my way hath been
Various and wide; but never had I bow'd
With heartfelt adoration, never vow'd
My humblest homage in Life's light or gloom,
In happiness or sorrow, at thy tomb,
Oh, sweetest SHAKSPEARE! WILLIE, yet to thee,
All that for many years has solac'd me,
All that has cheer'd my path thro' weal or woe,
All that has rais'd, or wrapt my soul, I owe;
I never can forget when the tears fill'd
Mine eyes, and first my youthful bosom thrill'd
At thy creative magic—since that time,
As to a teacher, lovely and sublime,
I still have listen'd, and still hop'd one day
O'er thy cold mute ashes I might pay
This grateful strain.—

"Twas at the day's pale close,
The hour when sweetest evening slowly throws
On temple, and tow'r, and stream, her last repose,
When first I saw o'er the dark trees arise
That Fane, within whose walls great SHAKSPEARE lies
"In Fame's last sanctity."—Upon the stone
I stood, and thought of youth's brief sunshine gone,
And of that magic genius that beguil'd
Life's various journey since I was a child.
Never shall I forget it, till the light
Of latest evening shines, ere all be night;
Therefore I bend, with tears, before thy bust,
SHAKSPEARE! and kiss thy venerated dust.

Stratford-upon-Avon April 12, 1823.

F. C.

MR. DRAMA.

That the rage for novelty is very great, is a truth which every day's experience testifies, and I am fully aware that things of inferior merit take precedence in public estimation, merely in consequence of their being new ; and yet, when we take into consideration that many old things of real excellence are so little known to the present generation, that, were it not from information of their being of long standing before the public, any one, from a knowledge of their great merits, would esteem them beyond most achievements of modern geniuses ; it is astonishing and unaccountable that some sort of liking is not preserved for the merits of our ancestors, if only sufficient to preserve a knowledge of that quality of mind and power of genius which marked their literary productions. This observation, I conceive, applies with equal truth to every branch of literature, but I wish to direct it more particularly to the stage. In the dramatic department of literature, novelties are sought after with avidity, nor is the discrimination of talent deficient in the public mind ; the productions of the COLMANS, SHERIDAN, MILMAN, KNOWLES, &c. have met with such distinguished attraction and general approval, as argues no depreciation of taste and judgment ; but there are among the dramas of BEN JONSON, BEAUMONT and FLETCHER, MASSINGER, CONGREVE, and many others of the *Old School*, many that are so little known at present, so admirable in plot, wit, originality of character, and dramatic effect, and which would be so entirely novel to most of our young play-going friends, that their revival appears highly desirable ; and, were they allowed to take their turn with the dramas of our admired SHAKSPEARE, and our modern authors, they would still share the approbation of the public. Unfortunately it was the lot of CONGREVE and others to live in an age not so refined as the present, and some of their comedies therefore abound in obscenity ; but could not that be altered without materially injuring the spirit and humour of their characters ? I am by no means an advocate for lewd representations, but I certainly regret that so many productions, in every other respect particularly excellent, should be lost to the public, from the simple circumstance of their not concurring in the purity of modern taste. However obscene they

may appear to us, doubtless they were not considered so at the time they were written, since which society is so much improved, (and we may in a great measure thank the drama for it,) that a little pruning or alteration to our old comedies seem necessary, which, managed by a skilful hand, would render them chaste, and still preserve their dramatic beauties. The revival of old Plays that are worthy public estimation, would, under such circumstances, be desirable. Truly, it is lamentable to think that *Bobadil*, and many other characters of *inimitable* merit—inimitable in as much as no author has ventured to give us a shadow of likeness to them, or if so, the attempt has been so faint, that it is impossible to perceive the resemblance, should be lost to us, and the peculiar humour with which they were formerly represented, almost lost to the actors; we are not, however, without the hope that the qualifications in the actors would revive with the public desire to patronize sterling comedies in preference to every thing that bears the name of novelty. I have no wish to decry new productions of merit, or to damp the ardour of aspiring genius; it is those light, frivolous, witless, and hasty efforts of which I complain. The general boast of the authors of these productions is not the merits of their works, but the *very short time* in which they accomplished them.—What advantage this circumstance can be to the public, I am at a loss to conceive, but I shall always be very happy to hear of men of genius being well paid for their talent, whatever time they may devote to their productions, and particularly that the sterling merit of the olden time might be brought forward to our remembrance.

Yours, &c.

May 27th 1824.

DRAMATICUS.

A QUERY.

Does SHAKSPEARE allude to a part of the Play of "*Twelfth Night*" when he stiles the 2nd title "*What you will?*" (and if so what part of the Play), or is his meaning, that (like the generality of authors) not knowing what name to give it, he leaves his reader to bestow on it the title he thinks most appropriate?

B.W.

SKETCHES OF ANCIENT DRAMATIC CHARACTERS.

BEN JONSON.—AUBREY says, that he first acted and wrote, but both ill, at the *Green Curtain*, a kind of nursery or obscure playhouse, somewhere in the suburbs, towards Shoreditch or Clerkenwell; and that he afterwards undertook again to write plays, and hit it admirably well, particularly *Every Man in his Humour*, which was his first good one. This playhouse, according to Mr. MALONE, was also called "*The Theatre*," a term of distinction which makes him conjecture, that it was the first regular playhouse built near the metropolis. It stood in the Curtain road, Shoreditch, and acquired its name of the Curtain, from the custom of hanging out as a sign a *striped* (query *green*) curtain, while performing. JONSON is said by the above writer (AUBREY) to have "killed Mr. MARLOW, the poet, on Bunhill, coming from the Green Curtain playhouse." He adds the following curious information as to JONSON's person and habit:—"He was, or rather had been of a clear and fair skin, with one eye lower than t'other, like CLUN, the player, his habit very plain. I have heard Mr. LACY, the player, say that he was wont to weare a coate like a coachman's coate, with slits under the arme pitts. He would many times exceed in drinke; Canarie was his beloved liquor; then he would tumble home to bed, and, when he had thoroughly perspired then to studie. I have seen his studyeing chaire, which was of straw, such as old women used, and as AULUS GELLIUS is drawn in. Long since, in King JAMES's time, I have heard my uncle DANVERS say (who knew him) that he lived without Temple Barre, at a comb-maker's shop. In his latter time he lived at Westminster, in the house under which you passe as you go out of the churchyard into the old palace, where he dyed. He lies buried in the north aisle in the path of square stone, (the rest is lozange), opposite to the scutcheon of ROBERTUS DE ROS, with this inscription only on him (in a pavement square, blew marble, about 14 inches), '*O Rare Ben Jonson*,' which was done at the chardge of JACK YOUNG, afterwards knighted, who walking there when the grave was covering, gave the fellow eighteen pence to cutt

It. The following was a grace made by him extempore, before King JAMES :—

"Our king and queen, the Lord God blesse,
The Paltzgrave, and the Lady BESSE,
And God blesse every living thing
That lives, and breathes, and loves the king.
God bless the Council of Estate,
And BUCKINGHAM, the fortunate:
God blesse them all, and keep them safe,
And God blesse me, and God blesse RALPH.

"The king was mighty inquisitive to know who this RALPH was. BEN told him 'twas the drawer at the Swanne Tavern, by Charing Crosse, who drew him good Canarie. For this drollery his Majestie gave him an hundred pounds."

SHAKSPEARE.—"He was a handsome well shap't man, very good company, and of a very redie and pleasant smooth witt. The humour of the constable in the *Midsummer Night's Dreame*, he happened to take at Grendon in Bucks which is the road from London to Stratford, and that constable was living there about 1642, when I first came to Oxon. BEN JONSON and he did gather humours of men dally, wherever they came."—(Ibid.)

DICK BURBAGE, the original *Richard III.* of our great dramatic bard, and HEMINGS and CONDELL, the publishers of the first regular edition of his works, and who were contemporary players and patentees with him, are ludicrously mentioned in an old ballad on the burning of the Globe Theatre, Bankside, in 1613; which also hints at HEMINGS being defective in his speech:

"Some lost their hatts, and some their swords,
Then out runne BURBIDGE too;
The reprobates, though druncke on Munday,
Pray'd for the fool and HENRY CONDY:
While with swolne lips, like druncken FLEMINGS,
Distressed stood old stuttering HEMINGS.

The register of Shoreditch Church and St. Mary Overy's Church preserve the names of many of our very early players, besides those mentioned by Mr. MALONE, in his *Hu-*

tory of the English Stage, who belonged to the Curtain and Bankside Theatres. Most of them, however, are only known to us by this means. At the Curtain, before BEN JONSON's time, was the famous comedian DICK TARLTON; and at the Globe were, JOHN TAYLOR, 1573; AUSTEN PHILLIPS, 1594; ROBERT BROWN, 1595; THOMAS DOWTON, 1600; RICHARD ALLEN, 1601; WILLIAM BROWNE, 1602; OWEN BARTLE, JOHN SINGE, 1602; JOHN DAYE, 1608; ROBERT GOFFE, 1608; and most remarkable for the name, an EDMUND SHAKSPEARE, as per the following entry among the burials—"Buried, 1607, EDMUND SHAKSPEARE, player, in the church." The eminent dramatic poets FLETCHER and MASSINGER, who had lived near, and probably been employed by the neighbouring theatres, were also buried in this church. FLETCHER died of the plague in 1625 (1), MASSINGER, from high respect, was attended by the comedians to the grave, but does not appear to have ever had stone or inscription; "even the memorial of his mortality," as a late writer observes, "is given in the register with a pathetic brevity, which accords but too well with the obscure and humble passages of his life: 'March 20, 1639-40, buried PHILIP MASSINGER, a stranger;' no flowers were flung into his grave—no elegies 'soothed his hovering spirit;' and of all the admirers of his talents and his worth, none but Sir ACTON COCKAYNE dedicated a line to his memory."

RICHARD COX.—KIRKMAN, a player of the same house, tells us, in his "Drolls," that COX was the favourite comedian of the Red Bull Playhouse, Clerkenwell, during the Civil Wars.

LACY, the favourite actor of King CHARLES II. (who had him painted in several characters), is described as having been "of an elegant shape and fine complexion."

(1) "A Knight of Norfolk, or Suffolk, had invited him into the country. He stayed but to get him made a suit of cloathes, and, while it was making, fell sick of the plague and dyed. This I had from his taylor, who is now a very old man, and clarke of St. Mary Overy's"—(AUBREY)

BEN JONSON, we are told, "tooke a note of his Yorkshire words and proverbes, for his *Tale of a Tub*." He died 1616, and was buried in the farther church-yard, of St. Martin in the Fields.

Sir WILLIAM DAVENANT succeeded BEN JONSON as Poet Laureat, and, at the beginning of the Civil War, was in the army. He is said to have written twenty-five plays. The wits made cruelly merry at the unlucky mischance of his losing his nose :—

"For Will had in his face the flaws
And marks receiv'd in countrey's cause :
They flew on him like lions passant,
And tore his nose as much as was on't."

AUBREY informs us that he was at his funeral, in Westminster Abbey, to which he was carried in a hearse from the Duke's Playhouse, Little Lincoln's-inn-fields, where he died; and that he had a coffin of walnut-tree, which Sir JOHN DENHAM said, was the finest coffin he ever saw in his life.

DRAMATIC BIOGRAPHER.

No. VI.

CARLO GOLDONI.

[Resumed from page 34.]

GOLDONI now went to Milan, where, in consequence of recommendations to the Venetian President, he was attached to the embassy, and found leisure to sketch out several works. The musical interlude of the *Venetian Gondolier* was the first he published. The campaign in 1733, at the conclusion of which Austria lost the possession of Italy, proved very disastrous to GOLDONI, by interrupting his labours, and obliging him to quit successively, Milan, Crema, Pizzighitone, and Parma. During his travels he was robbed by some deserters of the whole of his property. At Verona he found means to repair his losses by joining the comedians of that city, and they represented at Venice, in 1734, his tragedy of *Belisarius*, which was received with univer-

sal applause. His *Rosmonda* did not obtain the least success. He then went to Padua, and supplied that theatre with his productions. He continued supporting himself in this manner till 1736, when he married the daughter of a notary at Genoa, and afterwards returned to Venice, where he continued writing for the stage. He had not yet obtained the eminence in comedy he was destined to arrive at, though he constantly kept in view the example of *MOLIERE*, and his adventurous career was far from being terminated.

The Genoese Consul at Venice dying in 1739, *GOLDONI* succeeded him at the intercession of his wife's family. This situation being merely honorary, the state of his finances did not permit him to retain it after the year 1741. The campaign of this year throwing Italy into the same lamentable state, which it had suffered eight years before, prevented *GOLDONI* from undertaking his intended journey to Genoa. He stayed some time at Modena, then at Rimini, living on the productions of his pen, which were as favourably received as ever : but he was again destined to experience a similar reverse of fortune to that of 1733 : the ship which contained all his money and effects was taken by the Austrians off Pesaro. The Austrian quarter-master

being at about ten miles from that town, *GOLDONI* and his

wife determined on paying him a visit in order to recover their property if possible ; when they had proceeded about half way, they alighted and went to a little distance from their carriage, and upon their return, they found the postillion had gone off with it : alone and without the least hope of being able to procure assistance, they notwithstanding took the resolution of continuing their route, in which *GOLDONI* was obliged to carry his wife through two rivers. They arrived, however, at the quarter of the Austrian Commander, who generously restored his property, and advised him not to return to Pesaro. Prince *LOBCOWITZ*, General-in-Chief of the imperial army, had fixed his head-quarters at Rimini, and then resigned himself to *fêtes* and diversions. *GOLDONI* obtained the direction of the stage in that city, which employment was as advantageous to his talents as his fortune. He left Rimini as soon as the Austrians did, and went into Tuscany. There he resided in many towns, and became acquainted with a number of eminent men. At

Pisa, overcome by the solicitations of his friends, he again followed the profession of the bar, in which he distinguished himself exceedingly; but a letter from the celebrated comedian, SACCHI, recalled him to his favourite occupations; however, he worked for the stage only in the night, and his wife was his only confidante. The piece required by SACCHI was soon executed, sent to Venice, and was acted with astonishing success. A second piece, "*Harlequin's Child lost and found*," though a mere sketch, received no less applause. This good fortune, aided by some affront he experienced at the Pisan bar, determined him to renounce the legal profession. He departed for Mantua, in 1747, and three months after for Venice, where he found his family and his old friends. This city had three theatres; he attached himself to that of St. Angelo. At the conclusion of the theatrical season of 1748, GOLDONI engaged to give sixteen new pieces in the following year. He performed this engagement, but fell ill through excessive fatigue, and his malady was heightened by the selfishness of the manager, and the critiques and calumnies of his enemies: on his recovery he followed the company to Turin and Genoa, every where reaping the same success. He was

constantly reproached by the envious as inferior to MOLIERE: this he was well aware of, and acknowledged without hesitation, and in order to put a stop to such reports, he composed a work of which MOLIERE was the subject, and which has been translated into French by MARCIER. GOLDONI now quitted the company of St. Angelo, and entered into a more profitable engagement with that of St. Luke.

In 1753 he published, by subscription, the first volume of his Theatre, which his merit and the admiration his plays had excited throughout Italy rendered a very profitable speculation. This occasion was seized by his enemies to load him with epigrams, satires, and the raillery of an entire academy composed of all the wits of Venice. Notwithstanding this and every other sort of annoyance and impediment, GOLDONI pursued his plan and arrived at the summit of his wishes, in spite of prejudice and a crowd of admirers and partisans of the old Italian comedy. He succeeded in substituting the regular comedy in the place of

extemporaneous pieces, and prevailed on the actors to abandon their masks. These reformatations were not made without a struggle, which sometimes obliged the author to have respect to the old method:—"I allowed," said he, "masks in extemporaneous pieces, and employed interesting and comic characters in humorous pieces. Every one was pleased with his part: time and patience reconciled every thing, and I had the satisfaction to find myself allowed to follow my own taste, which became, in a few years, the standard of Italy."

The reputation of GOLDONI extended through all Europe. The infant DON PHILIP invited him to Parma in 1756, and required him to write three comic operas, one of which *The Good Daughter* was set to music by DUNI and PICCINI. DON PHILIP, to show the esteem he had for his talent, gave him a pension, and styled him, by letters patent, the Poet of the Duke of Parma.—GOLDONI wished to visit France, and his desire was gratified in the following manner.—The applause which his "*Harlequin's Child Lost and Found*" obtained in Paris at the *Comédie-Italienne*, determined the first gentlemen of the bed-chamber to the King, to request his attendance in France for the purpose of restoring the former reputation of that theatre. Their honorable proposals were accepted, and he arrived in Paris, in 1761. GOLDONI had at this time composed one hundred and twenty different pieces. His personal acquirements; as much as his reputation as a poet, obtained for him an introduction to the first society of the capital. The reader to *Madame la Dauphine*, (second wife of the Dauphin, father of Louis XVI.) whom he was acquainted with, presented him to that princess, who placed him in the service of the daughters of the King in the situation of reader and Italian master. GOLDONI, in consequence of this appointment, renounced comedy, and resigned himself to his new functions. He had apartments in the Chateau of Versailles, and was admitted to all the excursions of the Court; and having but very short lessons to give to his pupils, his dependence was light, and his life pleasant. Some years afterwards, his services were dispensed with, but he preserved his title and pension. He was now settled in Paris, and being determined to spend the remainder of his life in

France, resisted the propositions made to him from Lisbon, London, and Venice, where he was universally regretted. His nephew, whom he had brought with him to France, and whom he tenderly loved, obtained a situation, through the DUC DE CHOISEUL, in the military school, as Italian master, and was afterwards placed in the War Office. GOLDONI had, for some time, been desirous of increasing his reputation, by writing a French comedy.—The marriage of the Dauphin, furnished him with a subject, and he composed one in three acts, the *Borru Bienfaisant*, which was acted in Paris with universal applause, on the 4th of Nov. 1771, and the next day with the same success at Fontainebleau.—*L'Avare Fastueux*, acted at Fontainebleau in 1773, had not the same success; it was withdrawn, and neither acted at Paris nor published. His services were required at court in 1775, to give lessons in Italian to Mde CLOTHILDE, the destined wife of the Prince of Piedmont; and he was afterwards charged with the instruction of Mde ELIZABETH, sister to LOUIS XVI; but he soon obtained permission to retire in favour of his nephew.

At length, free from all dependance, he employed himself in writing his memoirs in French, which have been translated into English, by JOHN BLACK. This work occupied GOLDONI three years, and was published in 1787; the author having then attained the age of eighty years.—The political events which broke out on the tenth of Aug. 1792, occasioned him the loss of his pension by the suppression of the civil list. Deprived of every resource, and reduced to poverty, he was attacked with a dangerous disorder, and died the day after a decree passed the convention for restoring his salary. CHENIER caused a decree to pass, allowing his widow, aged seventy-six, a pension of 1200 francs, with the payment of what was due to her husband.

In his memoirs he has given extracts from, or analysis of all his plays, and his flexible and productive genius has done this in such a lively manner, that we are sure every one would find an infinite source of pleasure in their perusal. It would then be seen, with what art, what variety, and what superior genius he drew characters, depicted manners, and caused his readers to participate in the different feelings of men of every description.

We cannot conclude this article without again reminding our readers of the just claims, which the illustrious reformer of Italian comedy has to their admiration. GOLDONI, like MOLIERE, reformed the theatre of his country, and introduced manners and characters upon a stage where nothing previously had been represented but farces and buffooneries. He created characters, he observed and depicted with as much ability as force, the manners, the passions, the vexations, and follies of men in every situation of life.

ON THE PRÆTERNATURAL BEINGS OF SHAKSPEARE.

The poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,
Doth glance from heav'n to earth, from earth to heav'n,
And as imagination bodies forth,
The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen,
Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing,
A local habitation and a name.

Midsummer Night's Dream.

As the genius of SHAKSPEARE, through the whole extent of the poet's province, is the object of our enquiry, we should do him great injustice, if we did not attend to his peculiar felicity, in those fictions and inventions, from which poetry derives its highest distinction, and from whence it first assumed its pretensions to divine inspiration, and appeared the associate of religion.

The ancient poet was admitted into the synod of the gods : he discoursed of their natures, he repeated their counsels, and without the charge of impiety or presumption, disclosed their dissensions, and published their vices. He peopled the woods with nymphs, the rivers with deities ; and, that he might still have some being within call to his assistance, he placed responsive echo in the vacant regions of air.

In the infant ages of the world, the credulity of ignorance greedily received every marvellous tale : but, as mankind increased in knowledge, and a long series of traditions had established a certain mythology and history the poet was no longer permitted to range, uncontrolled, through the boundless dominions of fancy, but became restrained in some measure, to things believed or known.—

Though the duty of poetry to please and to surprise still subsisted, the means varied with the state of the world; and it soon grew necessary to make the new inventions lean on the old traditions.—The human mind delights in novelty, and is captivated by the marvellous, but even in fable itself requires the credible.—The poet who can give to splendid inventions, and to fictions new and bold, the air and authority of reality and truth, is master of the genuine sources of the Castalian spring, and may justly be said to draw his inspiration from *the well-head of pure poetry*.

SHAKESPEARE saw how useful the popular superstitions had been to the ancient poets : he felt that they were necessary to poetry itself. One needs only to read some modern French heroic poems to be convinced how poorly epic poetry subsists on the pure elements of history and philosophy. TASSO, though he had a subject so popular, at the time he wrote, as the deliverance of Jerusalem was obliged to employ the operations of magic, and the interposition of angels and demons, to give the marvellous, the sublime, and, I may add, that religious air to his work, which ennobles the enthusiasm, and sanctifies the fiction of the poet. ARIOSTO's excursive muse wanders through the regions of romance, attended by all the superb train of chivalry, giants, dwarfs, and enchanters; and, however, these poets, by the severe and frigid critics may have been condemned for giving ornaments not purely classical to their works ; I believe every reader of taste admires, not only the fertility of their imaginations, but the judgement with which they availed themselves of the superstition of the times, and of the customs and modes of the country, in which they laid their scenes of action.

To recur as the learned sometimes do, to the mythology and fables of other ages, and other countries, has ever a poor effect : JUPITER, MINERVA, and APOLLO, only embellish a modern story, as a print from their statues adorns the frontispiece.—We admire indeed the art of the sculptors, who give their images with grace and majesty ; but no devotion is excited, no enthusiasm kindled, by the representations of characters whose divinity we do not acknowledge.

When the Pagan temples ceased to be revered, and the Parnassian mount existed no longer, it would have been difficult for the poet of later times to have preserved the divinity of the muse inviolate, if the western world too had not had its sacred fables. While there is any national superstition which credulity has consecrated, any hallowed tradition revered by vulgar faith, to that sanctuary, that assylum, may the poet resort.—Let him tread the holy ground with reverence; respect the established doctrine; exactly observe the accustomed rites, and the attributes of the object of veneration; then shall he not vainly invoke an inexorable or absent deity. Ghosts, fairies, goblins, elves, were as propitious, were as assistant to SHAKESPEARE, and gave as much of the sublime, and of the marvellous, to his fictions, as nymphs, satyres, fauns, and even the triple geryon, to the works of ancient bards. Our poet never carries his proternatural beings beyond the limits of the popular tradition. It is true that he boldly exerts his poetic genius and fascinating powers in that magic circle, in which none e'er durst walk but he: but as judicious as bold, he contains himself within it. He calls up all the stately phantoms in the regions of superstition, which our faith will receive with reverence. He throws into their manners and language a mysterious solemnity, favourable to superstition in general, with something highly characteristic of each particular being which he exhibits.—His witches, his ghosts, and his fairies, seem spirits of health or goblins damn'd; *bring with them airs from heaven, or blasts from hell*—His ghosts are sullen, melancholy and terrible. Every sentence, uttered by the witches, is a prophecy or a charm; their manners are malignant, their phrases ambiguous, their promises delusive.—The witches cauldron is a horrid collection of what is most horrid in their supposed incantations. Ariel is a spirit, mild, gentle and sweet, possessed of supernatural powers, but subject to the command of a great magician.

The fairies are sportive and gay; the innocent artificers of harmless frauds, and mirthful delusions. *Puck's* enumerations of the feasts of a fairy, is the most agreeable recital of their supposed gambols. To all these beings our poet has assigned tasks and appropriated manners adapted

to their imputed dispositions and characters: which are continually developing through the whole piece, in a series of operations conducive to the catastrophe. They are not brought in as subordinate or casual agents, but lead the action, and govern the fable; in which respect our countryman has entered more into theatrical propriety than the Greek tragedians.

(To be resumed.)

THEATRICAL INQUISITION.

Throughout the drama's range we widely stray,
And each one's worth we candidly survey;
For the whole stage, the mind before us brings,
And marks out nature through her several springs.

NEW DRURY LANE THEATRE.

Journal of Performances, with Remarks.

April 26.—Winter's Tale—Zoroaster.

27.—Merry Wives of Windsor—Ibid.

28.—Hypocrite—My Grandmother—Ibid.

29.—Lord of the Manor—Zoroaster.

30.—Rob Roy Macgregor—Ibid.

May 1.—Measure for Measure—Ibid.

This excellent comedy was revived this evening with much splendor of costume, and with the full force of dramatic ability, which abounds in this establishment. *Measure for Measure* is a good acting play because of the variety of characters it develops—of the strong individuality with which they are marked—of the contrasted passions by which they are swayed—and of the interesting situations in which those passions are called into action; but the foundation of the play, without being equivoical, in our opinion is extremely indelicate, and our admiration of its dramatic character is mitigated by disgust at the moral obliquity it exhibits. The principal and real lesson inculcated is the "triumph of mercy over strict justice." Of all sorts of justice, we fear poetical justice is the least commendable. As manifested before us in this play, we find

in its dispensations the guilty escape with a few alarms, and the innocent undergo a long probation of fear and every species of anxiety. It is true this may be conformable to the occurrences of real life, but then it does not conform to the wishes and feelings of the audience, or at all accord with their sympathies. Our exceptions are greatly qualified by some very fine acting. MACREADY as the *Duke*, played throughout with admirable propriety. The opportunities of producing strong effect are few ; of these few, however, he availed himself, and was powerful and most impressive in those fine passages of deep thoughtfulness and philosophic reflection, which are blended with the expression of the strong passions and impulses of nature. Such was particularly the character of his acting in the latter scenes of the play. There was a peculiarly fine emphatic intelligence in his mode of saying,

“ By mine honesty,
If she be mad (as I believe no other),
Her madness hath the oddest frame of sense ;
Such a dependency of thing on thing
As ne’er I heard in madness.”

The *Angelo* of TERRY was a well-conceived performance ; the crude style of his acting is happily suited to a character that does not enlist the sympathy of the audience, and almost excites their displeasure even to hatred. LISTON played *Lucio*. At Covent Garden he was wont to personate the clown *Pompey*. The alteration of parts can scarcely be considered an improvement. *Lucio* is a petulant fellow, but LISTON renders him quite too farcical. This very clever performer somewhat overacts this as well as other parts ; but his object is attained, for the house is in a constant giggle whilst he is on the boards ; and it is now as habitual for an audience to laugh at whatever he says or does, as it is for them to turn their eyes towards the stage on the rising of the curtain. He may well be proud of this ascendancy over the public mind. MRS. BUNN as *Isabella*, played in a manner worthy the best performances of Miss SOMERVILLE. It is almost impossible to deprive the part, in the delivery of some passages, of a conventicle twang ; but it was as little disfigured by that disagreeable intona-

tion, as the nature of the part it. I would permit. Her performance throughout was spirited and well sustained. The other performers acquitted themselves most creditably, and the play was given out for repetition amidst very general applause. *Zoroaster* followed; it improves on repetition: the processions are more correct, and the machinery better worked and attended to, than on the first few evenings of its representation.

3.—*Ibid*—*Ibid*.

4.—*Lord of the Manor*—*Ibid*.

5.—*Hypocrite*—*My Grandmother*—*Ibid*.

6.—*Merry Wives of Windsor*—*Zoroaster*

7.—*Artaxerxes*—*Deaf as a Post*—*Ibid*.

8.—*Winter's Tale*—*Zoroaster*.

This play was performed for the last time this season. The production of it did not, we should think, prove a profitable speculation; for on the previous night of its performance, and on this evening, before half price, there was a truly "beggary account of empty boxes," nor could the other parts of the house boast a more thronged attendance. The cause of this is, that although this is one of the best acting of SHAKESPEARE'S plays, when it is well acted, yet the mediocrity of the performance of it at this house causes it to go off exceeding heavily. MACREADY, as *Leontes*, delivers some of the beautifully poetical passages with a spirit of ardent and enthusiastic declamation; indeed sometimes with an enthusiasm bordering on violence; for this gentleman "is not any thing if not *passionate*." Mr. KEMBLE, who had many admirers of his performance of this character, played it in a tone of suppressed jealousy, and smothered indignation, as if the feelings with which his soul was harrowed, were "thoughts that lay too deep for words." KEMBLE conceived (we think rightly) the character to be a despondent and heart-broken, rather than a bad or revengeful one; his declamations, therefore, partook of a fierce classical frenzy, above which he did not soar. MACREADY seems to think *Leontes'* mind to have been stung with all the furies of *Orestes*, works himself into a perpetual passion, and threatens momentarily the acting of an hysterical fit. Mrs. BUNN played *Hermione* with very admirable effect; we would

only take exception to a monotony in her tones, that renders it not very pleasing to listen to her delivery of a speech of any length. In the last scene she acted even to excellence; there was true dignity and passion in the statue-scene—she stood erect “a beauteous bust of monumental marble.” This was the best acted, as the play is to be performed no more, it would be gratuitous censure to add the only well acted scene in the play. Mr. ARCHER made *Polixenes* a very different sort of personage from what SHAKESPEARE intended he should be. It is not easy to tell often what character this gentleman personates, or in what tragedy he performs, for he mouths his part so egregiously that it might be a speech in *Othello* or *Hamlet* he is speaking for aught we are able to judge from any distinct or articulate sounds that reach the ear. Mrs. WEST was very spirited in her remonstrances against the injustice done the queen. There were some passages in her part, which at no distant period in our political history would have created a very lively excitement in the minds of an English audience.

10.—Richard III.—*Ibid.*

Mr. KEAN had been announced for some time past for the part of *Gloster*. A fuller house assembled on the occasion, than even his celebrity in this part led us to expect. There appeared to be an increase of curiosity to see him, which arose, it is to be presumed, solely from his long absence. The expectation of a numerous audience was, however, disappointed.—The overture had commenced at the usual time, and it was played over and over, and still the green curtains hung quietly to the great surprise of every one in the house. After a considerable lapse of time, Mr. BUNN, the stage-manager, appeared and addressed the audience to the following effect:

“Ladies and Gentlemen—I am extremely sorry to be under the necessity of appearing before you for the purpose of offering an apology which I would fain hope may still be rendered unnecessary—an apology, ladies and gentlemen, for the absence of Mr. KEAN.—(*Great disapprobation.*) To my great astonishment, I have but recently received the letter which I hold in my hand, dated from Derby, which contains a certificate from a medical man, signifying that

Mr. KEAN was then so ill as to be unable to come to town—*(Hisses.)* Under these circumstances, ladies and gentlemen, I lost no time in waiting on Mr. MACREADY to request his assistance in this dilemma. That gentleman with the ready zeal which he has always shown for the welfare of this establishment, immediately consented to do any thing in his power that might meet the wishes of the audience.—*(Great applause.)* Ladies and gentlemen, we throw ourselves upon your indulgence—without Mr. MACREADY's assistance it will be impossible to proceed with the announced play:—Will you be pleased, ladies and gentlemen, either by one or more voices, to signify your commands; and whatever is in our power shall be done to obey them."—Great applause, with some hisses, mixed with cries of—"MACREADY!"—"MACREADY! as *King Richard!*" followed this address; and it appearing to be the general wish that the above mentioned celebrated performer would undertake the character, Mr. BUNN bowed and withdrew. It was a considerable time before the curtain drew up for the commencement of the tragedy; and when at length Mr. MACREADY came on as *Gloster*, immense applause ensued. He advanced, and said in substance as follows:—"Ladies and Gentlemen, may I beg to state that I have undertaken this character under circumstances that have precluded preparation, I am also extremely unwell; and by appearing in it thus; I trust, I am no more a fit subject for censure, than I may be of praise. I am here, urged only by my desire to convenience the Theatre, and to attend to the wishes of the public."—This speech was received with the greatest marks of approbation, and the play proceeded.

Mr. MACREADY has unnecessarily on this occasion precluded us by his very sensible address from passing any "censure" on his performance of *Gloster*. If we had felt ourselves possessed of more latitude of criticism we could not have pointed out any marked failure. In short, his genius shone out in numerous passages, which drew forth genuine applause. Playing the part, as he did, under very peculiar difficulties, he is entitled to the warm thanks of the management, and the well-remembered favour of the public. The play was extremely well acted; and concluded amidst the greatest applause.

As to the *illness* with which Mr. KEAN has been seized at *Derby*, we know not what name to give it. He must be his own apologist.—However there were considerable buzzings, and not a few ill-natured whisperings breathed, which were not very charitable, and which were, we hope not very true; but we are inclined to think that a proceeding like this, will not at all forward him in public estimation.—We hope our favourite actor does not grow careless of upholding the favour he has so hardly earned, or become unmindful of “what the world will say.”

11.—Merry Wives of Windsor—Ibid.

12.—Hypocrite—My Grandmother—Ibid.

13.—Artaxerxes—Deaf as a Post—Ibid.

14.—Rob Roy—Zoroaster.

15.—Cure for the Heart Ache—Ibid.

Another “*sudden indisposition*” happened this evening, which most unfortunately deprived Mr. MUNDEN of the honour of appearing before the audience” as *Old Rapid*.

Some of our brother critics are wickèd enough to suspect that these “*misfortunes*” are oftentimes got up for the occasion. In the present instance, however, we are inclined to believe that we owe our disappointment to that mortal enemy to man, the gout, to which Mr. MUNDEN is unluckily too liable. Mr. LISTON undertook the part of *Old Rapid*, and had not our expectations been excited by the announcement that Mr. MUNDEN would perform that character *for the last time*, we should have been very well entertained. His predilections for his old familiar friends—the thimble and the goose, were humourously prominent; and his doating fondness towards his only son “Neddy,” begot him a warm corner in our heart, especially as he seemed quite free from all consciousness of his “*plum*,” to the tune of one hundred thousands, of which he boasted only as it was a compliment to his honest industry. Not a tincture of the miser was in him, Mr. BROWN played *Young Rapid*, with a vivacity and humour that gained him considerable applause. We were too far from the stage to observe his features (which by the bye would have been a considerable drawback to our enjoyment of MUNDEN, who is the very prince of grimace), but if Mr. BROWN was as happy with his face, as in other respects, we consider his *Young Rapid* to have been

a very good piece of acting. KNIGHT's *Frank Outland* had all the quaint drollery, and stultified cunning, that we could wish. The other characters were very well sustained. MR. GATTIE, as *Vortex*, might have been less of an old fool, villain as he was; and if Miss L. KELLY's *Jessie Outland* had been a little less conscious of her innocence, and had partaken a little more of the artless country girl, it would have divested her of a sort of unamiable stiffness which turned our first rising love towards her into a feeling of mere cool respect.

The audience was thinly scattered over the house, owing, no doubt, to the unfavourableness of the weather.

17.—*Macbeth*—*Ibid.*

18.—*Merry Wives of Windsor*—*Ibid.*

19.—*Hypocrite*—*Deaf as a Post*—*Ibid.*

20.—*Road to Ruin*—*Spanish Gallants*—*Love, Law and Physic.*

21.—*Hypocrite*—*Liar*—*Zoroaster.*

22.—*Road to Ruin*—*Spanish Gallants*—*Love, Law and Physic.*

COVENT GARDEN THEATRE.

April 26.—*Hamlet*—*Spirits of the Moon.*

27.—*Pride shall have a Fall*—*Ibid.*

28.—*Clari*—*Hunter of the Alps*—*Ibid.*

29.—*Pride shall have a Fall*—*Ibid.*

30.—*Jealous Wife*—*Ibid.*

May 1.—*Pride shall have a Fall*—*Ibid.*

3.—*Henry IV.* [1st. part]—*Ibid.*

The first part of this play was performed at this theatre, with all the "pomp and circumstance" of a revival, attention to costume and other sounding epithets in the announcement. Surely it does not require all this *trickery* to recommend the inspirations of SHAKESPEARE's muse to the people of England; but trickery is a part of the practical philosophy of theatrical management, and this accounts for the superfluous epithets and boastings which now-a-days accompany the announcement of almost every dramatic performance. The principal attraction in this play was the novelty of Mr.

CHARLES KEMBLE's first appearance in London as *Sir John Falstaff*. He had played the part, we understood, with considerable success, in several provincial theatres. Although his fame had preceded him to the metropolis, we own we were not easily susceptible of being made parties to such a dramatic illusion as the metamorphose of *Romeo* into *Sir John Falstaff*,—of the accomplished lover into the representative of an old, jesting sensualist. Who could fancy the well-formed figure, the light movement and graceful deportment of CHARLES KEMBLE, as representing "the fulness of the spirit of wit and humour *bodily*." Who could suppose the ardent and enthusiastic *Romeo*, ready to leap up to Juliet in the balcony, as a person likely to "lard the lean earth as he walk'd along?" Notwithstanding this personal unfitness for the part (an unfitness of which Mr. KEMBLE is doubtless not desirous to divest himself), yet he evinced a very correct conception of this very comic and original character. If his performance was not perfect, it was because he had not those natural qualifications which Dowton brings to the character, and without which *Falstaff's* stage-substitute cannot be "witty himself, or the cause of wit in others." Mr. KEMBLE seemed not insensible to the disadvantages under which he laboured, and this apparent consciousness imparted an elaborate air to his acting, which greatly impaired the off-handed and jovial pleasantries which constitute the redeeming qualities of this strange and eccentric character. In short the general performance of Mr. KEMBLE did not impair, neither did it enhance, his previous reputation. Miss F. H. KELLY played *Lady Percy*. She had but little to do, but did that little well. Her reception, from a very crowded house was most cordial and flattering; it conveyed, we thought, an intimation to the management of a desire to see her oftener. This would be but a due attention to their own interests and to the wishes of the public; it would moreover be but an act of justice to a young lady of real and approved merit, who owes them very little on the score of liberal and kind encouragement. There was an arch fascination in the delivery of her solicitation of *Hotspur*, which drew down a burst of well-earned applause—

"In faith I'll break thy little finger, *Henry*,
 "An if thou wilt not tell me all things true."

The *Hotspur* of Mr. YOUNG was a performance that might rank amongst the best of that accomplished actor. The character is the very impersonation of English chivalry, and is well adapted to his full-toned declamation and fine flow of action. Mrs. DAVENPORT, as the *Hostess*, was very buxomish and very clever. The other parts were well sustained; and the play given out in repetition for Wednesday, amid a general expression of warm approbation. There was a display of some new and beautiful scenery; and the attention to costume, which was costly, was creditably correct.

4.—Native Land—Ibid.

5.—Pride shall have a Fall—Ibid.

6.—Henry IV.—Ibid.

7.—Clari—Hunter of the Alps—Ibid.

8.—Pride shall have a Fall—Ibid.

10.—Henry IV—Ibid.

11.—Native Land—Ibid.

12.—Pride shall have a Fall—Ibid.

13.—Henry IV—Clari.

14.—Pride shall have a Fall—Spirits of the Moon.

15.—All in the Wrong—Hunter of the Alps.

17.—Henry IV—Spirits of the Moon.

18.—Pride shall have a Fall—Simpson and Co.

19.—Henry IV—Clari.

20.—Pride shall have a Fall—Spirits of the Moon.

21.—Much ado about Nothing—Miller's Maid.

22.—Pride shall have a Fall—Hunter of the Alps.

MINOR DRAMA.

COBBOURG THEATRE.

This theatre, under the excellent arrangements of Mr. BURGESS, the present proprietor, has risen to a very considerable eminence in the estimation of the public.—We have, in the progress of our publication, often had occasion to speak in the highest terms of the judicious ma-

nagement, and indefatigable industry of the above named gentleman, in the conduct of those theatres, of which he has been successively the proprietor; and we trust our readers, who have witnessed his abilities, and liberality, will give us due credit for the sincerity of our remarks. Indeed from the superior claims that Mr. B. always puts forth for our amusement, we have always endeavoured to bestow that expanded notice on his exertions, which a feeling of justice, towards the taste, talent and enterprize so continually manifested by him, imperiously urges us to bestow.

It gives us much pleasure to state, that this splendid establishment, (which is decidedly fitted up, in a more tasteful and elegant manner, than any minor place of amusement in the metropolis,) has been exceedingly well attended since its opening at Easter, and every person who has witnessed the performances, retires highly gratified and most agreeably surprised, for every department is so well conducted that there is nothing left to be wished for.

Since our last notice, that true child of MOMUS, J. REEVE has been lending his powerful aid and splitting the sides of all the laughter-loving folks on this side the water. The additions of Mrs. W. CLIFFORD, Mrs. WAYLETT, Mrs. DAVIDGE, all three excellent actresses, render the company one of the most effective we ever remember in a minor theatre.

A variety of interesting and excellent pieces have been produced—the principal of which have been a serious melo drama called “STROZZI; or *The Free Traders of Piedmont*,” which served to display the abilities of Messrs. BENGOUGH, LEWIS, JERVIS and BRADLEY, and Mesdames WAYLETT and STANLEY, to very great advantage;—a clever burletta, founded on a well known opera, performed sometime since, at the two great houses, called “*THE CITIZEN OF PARIS, or The Prince's Stratagem* :” this piece was borrowed from the French theatre, and translated into English by Mr. ARNOLD, of the English Opera House. Its merits attracted the attention of the managers of both theatres at one time, but it was produced first at D. L. T. as a retaliation for the conduct of the proprietors of C. G. T. with respect to the “*Dog of Montargis*,” which was by

a stolen march, produced by the latter house; a few nights earlier than the former could play it. It is a light amusing pretty affair, and the tale consists of the disguises assumed by the heir presumptive to the throne of France, in order to obtain the hand of the princess of Navarra. Mr. BURNBOUGH played the prince admirably, and gave us some clever specimens of his abilities for the higher walks of comedy—particularly in his scenes with *Pedrito Potts* the innkeeper, in which the equivoque was so well kept up, as to call forth thunders of approbation. J. REEVES in the latter character displayed a drollness of manner, and richness of humour, which we have seldom seen equalled; Mrs. WAYLETT, as *Page* to the *Prince*, Mrs. TENNANT, as the *Princess*, and Mrs. DAVIDGE, as the *Grand Chamberlaine*, aided to the general effect. An "imitative sketch" followed, called "*DAGGERWOOD, Jun. or The Son of the great Sylvester*!" in which Mr. REEVE enacted seven or eight different characters, and introduced the "*Trip to Richmond*;" the extravaganza of "*First Vid the Grace Extraordinaire*" and imitations of KEAN, KEMBLE, HARLEV, &c. with great effect.

On 17th May, "a new grand historical drama," under the title of "*WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR! or The Days of the Curfew Bell*," was first produced, and fully justified the high expectations which had been formed from the various announcements. It is from the pen of Mr. BALL the cleverest melo dramatic writer of the day. In the present piece, (which is partially founded upon BOWLES's latest and most beautiful poem, "*The Grave of the last Saxon*,") every opportunity has been seized upon, by which the splendour of the scenery, dresses and decorations could be enhanced; and a drama of "a better leer," and of a more than ordinarily splendid description, has never been brought forth. We shall however allow the manager and author to speak for themselves.

"The historical period which forms the action of the present drama, though wholly new to the stage, abounds with circumstances of the most powerful interest, as being the foundation of many of our laws, customs and institutions, which subsist to the present time, and more espe-

cially, as developing the manners of our ancestors, at that remote period. In attempting, for the first time, to introduce these facts into the drama, every care has been taken to unite historical correctness, with powerful interest and striking theatrical effect. For this purpose, the manager has spared neither research in discovering, nor expence in procuring every authority extant that could direct, and every possible assistance of art that could heighten the general effect ; and he is happy in having it in his power to state, that by the kind condescension of Dr. MEYRICK, who most liberally granted the inspection of the whole of his extensive and recondite collection of ancient armour, and especially the drawings from the celebrated BAYEUX TAPESTRY, (executed by order of the brother of *William the Conqueror*, and which is the only authority extant,) he is enabled to submit to the public, in this spectacle, a faithful display of characteristic and picturesque scenery, magnificent armours, costume, properties and decorations, which, for strict adherence to historical correctness, costliness and brilliancy have never been equalled on any stage."

The author departs somewhat from the actual facts, and he has with much address shewn up *Harold*, as an usurper, and *Edgar Atheling*, the rightful heir to the throne as the supporter of *William's* views, and anxious for his acceptance of the crown ; nay in the last scene he is even made to place it on his head. The whole, however, is combined with much art, and some highly interesting incidents arise out of the adventures of *Edgar*, and the love he bears for *Adela*, the daughter of a Danish nobleman *de Lacy*. The conqueror is represented in history, as possessing a mind capacious and noble, a body vigorous, and a courage not to be repressed by difficulty or danger ; these traits in his character are well brought forth by the dramatist, and we cannot but feel a sort of affection for his memory, from these representations. The conquest of England, by Norman *WILLIAM*, for a long period excited continual heart-burnings and animosities, and it certainly is not a period that calls forth the national pride of our countrymen, like the chivalrous deeds of "the *HENRIES* and the *EDWARDS* of our isle ;"—but now, Saxon and Norman

blood, have so long mixed together, that the epocha is nearly forgotten—and in the present piece the awkward word “conquest” is never used; and every circumstance in allusion to it is so completely softened down, that if pure Saxon blood, should by possibility flow in the veins of any of our contemporaries of the nineteenth century, it would not be inflamed in witnessing the representation of this drama. For ourselves, we think our country is under considerable obligations to the Norman conqueror, although some of his “acts and deeds” were of an arbitrary description. The priests and their monkish superstitions, which held strong sway over the minds of the common people, gave way to a more enlightened system of administration; The Norman institutions improved the laws, and the administration of them, and military science received some excellent improvements from which the future glory of the country may be dated.

In addition to this WILLIAM introduced into England that strict execution of justice, for which his administration had been celebrated in Normandy and which was before unknown in this country: he restrained by severe discipline, all military insolence; he confirmed the liberties and immunities of all the cities of England. “The character of this Prince, observes Lord LYTTLETON, has seldom been set in its true light; some eminent writers having been dazzled so much by the more shining parts of it, that they have hardly seen its faults; while others, out of a strong detestation of tyranny, have been unwilling to allow him the praise he deserves. He may with justice be ranked among the greatest generals any age has produced. There was united in him activity, vigilance, intrepidity, caution, great force of judgment, and never failing presence of mind. He was strict in his discipline and kept his soldiers in perfect obedience, yet preserved their affection. His aspect was noble, his stature tall, and the composition of his muscles so strong, that there was scarcely a man to be found who could bend his bow, or handle his arms. His courage was heroic and he had a noble vigour of mind:—no luxury softened him, no riot disordered, no sloth relaxed. It helped not a little to maintain the high respect his new made subjects had for him, that the majesty of his

character was never let down by any incontinence or indecent excess."

To this bright side of the Conqueror's character the author of the Drama before us has constantly leaned, omitting no opportunity of placing him in a favourable situation and making him the foremost in every great and good work, while sentences of a truly patriotic description continually flow from his mouth, such as "If I were to act unjustly I should not be a fit king to rule over Britons" and others of the like nature.—*Harold* is represented as an usurper, and his mother *Githa* as a woman of the most revengeful and revolting passions. *Edgar Atheling* is a prominent character in the piece and the incidents arising out of his exile and outlawry are of the most interesting description.

It behoves us now to speak of the actors: although we have not left ourselves space sufficient to do that justice to their merits which they so well deserve. Messrs. BOURGHOUS, BENGOUGH and LEWIS played the 3 principal characters of *Edgar, De Lacy and William*. The former, displayed his elegant attitudes to great advantage, and influenced our tender feelings by his exclamations of sorrow and the relation of his sufferings during his outlawry. His acting was of a most superior cast, and his scene with *De Lacy* in the dungeon when he has been betrayed by the latter, was a very fine display of scorn and contempt for the treachery and baseness of a servile mind.—Mr. B. has a figure, face and voice well adapted for the stage.—He moves with ease, he speaks with fluency, his emphasis is generally correct, his tones varied, and his manner interesting. For characters of polished deportment and earnest enunciation,

"——this earth that bears the dead,
Bears not alive so stout a gentleman,"

his claims upon public favour, can never be resisted, they must always command applause. His interviews with the conqueror were sustained with great spirit.—Mr. BENGOUGH as the treacherous *De Lacy*, well supported his coadjutor; and was very effective in most of the scenes; his character is rather of a revolting nature, but the retribution he receives as the reward for his treachery,

is strict poetical justice. Mr. LEWIS delivered the speeches entrusted to his care with much force but the powers of the actor are scarcely competent to the task of correctly representing so renowned a conqueror. Mr. DAVIDGE who is always correct in his representations of senility, never pleased us more than by his performance of the "lean and alippered" impotence of a superannuated dotard *Gurth*, warder of *De Lacy's* castle. His dotish fondness for his young wife, and his doubts and fears of her being "a naughty woman" were all most naturally and laughably represented. Mr. BROWN, (*Jemmy Green*) displayed his usual dry comicality in the part of *Cedric* a swineherd : and Mr. JERVIS as *Earl Morcar*, a Saxon noble attached to *Githa*.

This gentleman improves greatly in his profession. His dying scene received well merited applause. Mrs. W. CLIFFORD, (who made her first appearance on this stage) played *Githa*, and exhibited a vigour and accuracy of tragic acting deserving the highest praise. Miss WATSON as *Adela* (niece to *De Lacy*) and Mrs. DAVIDGE as the wife of *Gurth*—also pleased us, the first by her correctness—the latter by her archness and naiveté.

The scenery would do credit to either of the national theatres, but we have only space to notice a small part of it. The first scene painted by JONES of an extensive view of *Rotherwood Castle*, with the turret of the Curfew Bell and distant village, by night, was cleverly done ; as was also an ancient bridge, and a magnificent banquet in St. Dunstan's Priory, in which a grand chivalric allegorical Ballet was introduced, displaying some exquisite dancing by Mons. and Madame LE CLERCQ. In the 2nd Act. A fine scene of a storm with *Hermitage of Rotherwood and River*, the rising of the waters and bursting of a flood-bank—perilous situation of the *Lady Adela*, and her preservation by *Edgar*, well deserved the applause which was bestowed on it. In the 3rd Act an *Ancient Cemetery of the Saxons*, exterior of *Aldreds Castle*, illuminated, and the interior of *Westminster Abbey*, by JONES and DANSON, were beautiful. The whole concluded with the impressive ceremony of *Williams* coronation ; we have never seen a picture that excited more powerful interest. The costume of

the period was strictly attended to, and the properties were equally as splendid as the scenery.—The music by T. HUGHES was very beautiful and appropriate. The painter, the musician, and the mechanist have contributed their labour with prodigious liberality, and we are given to understand the getting up of this piece has cost Mr. BURROUGHS nearly a thousand pounds—that he may be liberally rewarded by the public is our sincerest wish—and it already appears from the crowded state of the house every evening of its performance that “The Curfew bell,” to use a theatrical phrase has “told well.”

VAUXHALL GARDENS.

Notwithstanding the large sums of money expended by the present proprietors of these gardens, preparatory to their opening for the last season, workmen have been busily employed during the winter in preparing new fascinations for the frequenters of this popular place of amusement. A new painting by THORNE, representing in the centre the Cave of Fingal, 84 feet by 25, is completed; which has been put up where the representation of Mount Vesuvius was placed last year. Two new galleries are erected for the better accommodation of the company; one of which is opposite the theatre, and the other opposite the fire tower. The orchestra has been entirely repainted. The colours are red and white, relieved by very well executed gilding. A new sounding-board, in the form of a shell, has been placed over that part of the orchestra where the vocal performers stand when they are singing. We understand, should the weather permit, that it is the intention of the proprietors to open the gardens the beginning of June. We had almost forgotten to notice a great improvement that has been effected in the Pavillion. The partition that separated the rooms in that building has been removed; a new staircase has been erected, and a new gallery or supper-room has been added at that end of it, towards the Kennington-lane gate.

THEATRE ROYAL, GLASGOW.

Tuesday April 13th.—Our Theatre was re-opened by Mr. BYRNE, when Miss M. TREE, of the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden, made her first appearance this season in the Opera of "*Clari, or The Maid of Milan*." This opera is taken from a French ballet, of the same name, and it is one of the best French importations which we have seen. It is more of a melo-dramatic than operatic cast, and its merit principally consists in the intense excitement created by the incidents. The idea of the players' episode, however, is not new, and brings to our recollection the "*Hamlet*" of SHAKESPEARE. *Clari*—the disconsolate and heart-broken *Clari*, was enacted by Miss TREE; and a more chaste and impressive performance we never witnessed. The whole of her interview with the *Duke Vivaldi*, previous to her departure, was most feelingly given. But in the last scene, where she is introduced to her father—her convulsive shudder when listening to the narrative of his parental afflictions—the cry of horror with which she discovered herself—and her manner of clinging around him, entreating forgiveness—were truly admirable, and may challenge comparison with any piece of acting of the same kind on the stage. At present we have no space for observation on Miss TREE's extraordinary powers as a singer. The beautiful ballad, "*Home, sweet Home*," was sung by this lady in a most delightful and touching manner. There was a deep pathos in it, which gave it a melancholy but striking unison with the story of *Clari*. Of the other songs we have only room to say they were delightfully given and loudly encored. Those who have observed the peculiar mannerism of MACKAY of the Edinburgh Theatre, will be surprised when we state that his *Rolamo* is a most powerful and impassioned performance. With our recollection of MACKAY we were prepared to judge severely of Mr. SEYMOUR's *Rolamo*, but we must admit that it is a very effective performance. Mr. SEYMOUR will forgive us for recommending less vigour, and more solemnity in his walk as *Rolamo*. A Miss DYER made her debut before a Glasgow audience as *Vespina*. Her performance was easy and sprightly, and we doubt not this lady will prove a considerable acquisition to the Company. The o-

pera was altogether well performed. The Farce of the "*Spectre Bridegroom*" sent the audience home in good humour.

Wednesday, April 14th.—"Clari."—This excellent piece was repeated. It was followed by the clever musical after-piece of "*No song, no supper*," in which Miss TREE again delighted us with her chaste and pleasing acting. The *Nelly* of Miss GOODALL afforded great amusement to the audience, and was much applauded. Mr. FITZWILLIAM sustained the part of *Robin* cleverly. His joke as to the Poyais lingo was a happy original hit. Had the audience understood its application as well as we did, they would have laughed as much.

Thursday, April 15th.—"Guy Mannering."—Want of room compels us to refrain from making remarks. Being, as SHAKSPEARE has it, "nothing if not critical," we must notice that the white dress worn by Miss TREE, as *Lucy Bertram*, instead of a black silk crape dress, was injudicious. We were delighted to hear our favourite air, "And ye shall walk in silk attire," sung on the stage. "*Marriage of Figaro*."—This lively opera was well performed.

Friday, April 16th.—"Haunted Tower."—This Opera was favourably received by a most respectable audience. Mr. BING of the Theatre Royal, Edinburgh, played *Lord William*. As a singer he wants expression; as an actor he is very indifferent. "*No song, no supper*" was repeated.

Saturday, April 17th.—"The Barber of Seville"—This Opera was performed for the benefit of Miss TREE to a numerous and highly respectable audience. The piece is taken from ROSSINI's "*Il Barbiere di Siviglia*." The music, as adapted to the English stage, is by BISHOP. Miss TREE was *Rosina*. It was in this character she made her debut in Covent Garden in 1819. On Saturday she sustained the youthful, and love-stricken Spanish Female in the finest manner. Her dissimulation with the testy *Bartolo*, particularly in the scene where she is questioned as to the spot of ink on her finger, was delightful. But she pleased us most in the scene in which she chides *Count Almaviva*. Her duet on the balcony with *Fiorello* was very pretty, although inferior to Miss PATON's. Nothing could surpass the archness of her looks as she alternately watched her old guar-

dian *Dr. Bartolo*, and toyed with her lover *Count Almaviva*. Mr. ALEXANDER did not please us in *Old Bartolo*. His falling on the floor while Miss TREE was singing the delightful air, "An old man," &c. was an offensive interruption. Mr BING as *Fiorello*, and Mr. SEYMOUR as *Almaviva*, were both respectable. The arduous part of *Figaro, the Barber*, was sustained by Mr. FITZWILLIAM. His dress was very bad. Who ever saw the Barber of Seville in boots? Recollecting the inimitable acting of STANLEY of the Edinburgh Theatre in this character, we cannot say much for Mr. FITZWILLIAM's performance. In the course of the evening Miss TREE sung a number of her favourite songs.

From the Glasgow Theatrical Observer, a clever little periodical, published every week by Mr. M'PHUN at Glasgow.

PORTSMOUTH, *April 2nd.*—Our highly interesting and accomplished young actress, Miss HOLLAND, took her benefit, on Friday evening, under the patronage of Lieut. Col. E. C. FLEMING, and the officers of the 34th regiment. The theatre, on this occasion, presented one of the fullest audiences during the season, all being anxious to testify their approbation of her public and private merit.—The performances commenced with Mrs. COWLEY's excellent comedy of the "*Belle's Stratagem*." *Letitia Hardy*, by Miss HOLLAND, who portrayed the character with great spirit, skill and naiveté. She was ably supported by Messrs. MAXFIELD, KELLY and FLOYER. The *Widow Rackett* was well played, by Mrs. DAVIES. In the course of the evening, Miss HOLLAND recited COLLINS's *Ode on the Passions*, in a most impressive manner.—She also appeared as *Morgiana*, in "*The Forty Thieves*," having previously performed the part of *Biddy*, in the laughable interlude of "*Miss in her Teens*," to the no small satisfaction of the audience, who departed highly gratified in having witnessed the diversity of talent, displayed by this charming actress.

On *Monday, April 19th*, was performed at this theatre, an entire new melo dramatic piece, called "*HAROUN ALOMPRA*," or the *Hunter Chief*." This is the work of a literary gentleman of this place, and knight of the lancet; and for an amateur production was

generally considered very tolerable, and was, on the whole, favourably received. To attempt a sketch of the plot might be dangerous, as the nature of it appeared somewhat complex; and to avoid appearing unjust, by any misconception of the author's real meaning, I shall merely notice the performer's exertions. SHALDERS, as the *Chief*, and Mrs. DAVIES, as his bride, both played and looked the characters most inimitably. Messrs. MAXFIELD, COOKE, FLOYER, and Miss HOLLAND, added to the general effect, by their very respectable performances of the other personages in the drama. The processions were well managed, the banners and other paraphernalia splendid in the extreme. The evening-entertainments concluded with "*Love laughs at Locksmiths*." On Wednesday evening, Mrs. DAVIES took her benefit, and was honoured with a most elegant and numerous audience. The pieces selected were "*Wallace*" and the new opera of "*Native Land*." In the play, as *Helen*, she was "herself alone," for in characters of this nature, we have never seen one so near what we conceive to be perfection. Of the performance of "*Native Land*," it is impossible to speak too highly. FLOYER was more than usually amusing, as the *amorous old Spark*. SHALDERS, as *Peregrino*, was excellent; never did we see Miss HOLLAND to so much advantage as in *Carly*, or Mrs. DAVIES than in *Zanino*; all the other characters were very ably sustained, and on this evening the whole of the dramatis personæ seemed inspired with the determination to please. Great praise is due for the arrangement of this performance.

On Monday evening, (our favourite manager MAXFIELD's benefit,) we were presented with "*Clari*" and "*Sweethearts and Wives*;" somewhat too much singing, yet on the whole, the pieces went off with considerable eclat, and the house well attended. The theatre closed shortly after, (we are afraid,) rather an unprofitable season.

OBSERVER.

May 12th, 1824.

THE DRAMA;

OR,

THEATRICAL

POCKET MAGAZINE.

JUNE, 1824.

"The play, the play's the thing."—HAMLET.

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BOW-STREET, JUNE 16th

WILLIAMS v. ELLISTON.—Mr. W. H. WILLIAMS, of the Theatre Royal, Drury-lane, applied for a warrant against R. W. ELLISTON, Esq. to answer for inflicting a violent blow upon the head of the said Mr. WILLIAMS. Mr. W. stated to the magistrates, that having played in the first act of the play on Tuesday night, and having some time upon his hands between the play, he went round to the portico of the theatre; and shortly after Mr. E. came, and on perceiving Mr. W., very roughly ordered the sentinels to turn him away, saying he was “a most suspicious character!” That on his return to the theatre, he asked the meaning of Mr. E.’s conduct; that the lessee then began to abuse complainant, and said that he would not have any of his performers lurking about the front of the house; and, upon receiving an explanation, the only return he made for it was, knocking the complainant down. Under these circumstances, the Magistrates granted the warrant.

On the following day the office was crowded by the votaries of the *sock and buskin* all eager to hear the examination of this affair. Mr. E. entered the office at 2 o’clock when Mr. W. stated in evidence the facts above related. Mr. E., in reply, contended, Mr. W. was a most troublesome person, and that he had often occasion to rebuke him: he was, he (Mr. E.) believed, the author of a gross pamphlet, reflecting upon the concerns of the theatre. Mr. E. was about to state the nature of this publication when Mr. MINSHULL begged him to confine himself to the charge in question. Mr. E. said he could decide the affair in a few words: he most positively denied striking the complainant, though he might have collared him; but Williams having sworn to the assault, he should let it go to the sessions. Bail was put in, and the parties left the office.

ERRATA.

Page 113, line 21, for *prove* read *proves*.

— 151, — 15, (in some copies) should read thus—
a Saxon Noble attached to *Githa* performed in a highly respectable manner.

Answers to Correspondents next month.

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